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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SHUM, SF

SUBJ: BLACK ATTITUDES: THE BLACK WORKER, POTENTIAL
FOR INFLUENCING CHANGE

REFS: 76 PRETORIA 5192, CAPE TOWN 0054

1. (NOTE: THIS MESSAGE SHOULD BE READ WITH JOHANNESBURG
A-16 WHICH DESCRIBES THE HISTORY AND PRESENT STATUS OF
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THE BLACK LABOR MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.)

2. SUMMARY: GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE BLACK COMPONENT IN
THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOR FORCE (ABOUT 70 PERCENT), ONE MIGHT
CONCLUDE THAT THE BLACK WORKER IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO
INFLUENCE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF
FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE BY WITHHOLDING HIS LABOR. HE HAS NOT BEEN

ABLE TO DO THIS SUCCESSFULLY FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, THE PRINCIPAL ONES BEING SAG OPPOSITION TO BLACK UNIONS; THE TOUGH MEASURES IT HAS TAKEN TO PREVENT THEIR FORMATION; THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER; AND INADEQUACIES OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

3. SAG'S POLICY OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT IS IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE INCREASING ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE OF ETHIC GROUPS. IT SEEKS TO KEEP THE RACES APART WHILE THE DYNAMIC GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY IN RECENT YEARS HAS MADE WHITES INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT ON BLACK LABOR. CINTINUED EXPANSION OF THE ECONOMY, DEMANDING EVEN GREATER USE OF BLACKS IN SKILLED POSITIONS, IS ESSENTIAL FOR SOCIAL TRANQUILITY. THE BLACK WORKER IS GRADUALLY GAINING AWARENESS OF THE VULNERABILITY OF THE WHITE GOVERNMENT TO THE WHITHOLDING OF HIS LABOR, BUT HE STILL LACKS THE ORGANIZATION TO MOBILIZE THIS LATENT STRENGTH IN SUPPORT OF CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

THE DEPENDENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA ON BLACK LABOR
4. SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN DEPENDENT UPON A PLENTIFUL SUPPLY OF RAW MATERIALS AND AN AMPLE SOURCE OF LOW-COST BLACK LABOR WITH WHICH TO EXPLOIT THOSE RESOURCES. MORE THAN 18 MILLION OR 71.2 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION (25,471,000) ARE BLACK COMPARE TO 4.2 MILLION 16.6 PERCENT) WHITE. THE REST ARE CLASSIFIED AS COLORED AND ASIANS. THE OVERALL RATIO OF NON-WHITES TO WHITES TOOD AT 3.32 TO 1 IN 1971 AND WILL INCREASE TO 4.32 BY 1980 AND 6.91 BY 2000.
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5. ACCORDING TO THE 1970 CENSUS, THERE WERE 2.7 MILLION BLACKS WORKING IN WHITE AREAS OF WHICH MORE THAN 400,000 WERE FROM THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES OF MOZAMBIQUE, MALAWI, LESOTHO AND BOTSWANDA. WHILE BLACKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ESPECIALLY DOMINANT IN AGRICULTURE (90 P/C), MINING (90 P/C), AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS (70 P/C), THE BLACK LABOR FORCE IS BEING INCREASINGLY INDUSTIALIZED. IN MANUFACTURING, NON-WHITES (COLOREDS AND ASIANS AS WELL AS BLACKS) CONSTITUTED 64 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL LABOR FORCE IN 1951. IN 1970 THEIR SHARE HAD GROWN TO 73 PERCENT AND TODAY IT IS ESTIMATED AT CLOSE TO 80 PERCENT. THESE FIGURES ILLUSTRATE NOT ONLY THE DEPENDENCE OF WHITES ON BLACK LABOR BUT ALSO HOW EASILY BLACKS COULD CRIPPLE THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY IF THEY WERE TO WITHOLD THEIR LABOR.

6. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN VARIOUS PRIVILEGES FOR WHITES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME INCORPORATING INCREASING NUMBERS OF BLACKS IN THE PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNTRY,

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED AN ELABORATE SYSTEM OF LEGISLATION WHICH GOVERNS THE FLOW OF BLACK WORKERS TO WHITE AREAS, VERTICALLY REGULATES THE RANK ORDER BETWEEN WHITES AND NON-WHITES, AND GEOGRAPHICALLY RESTRICTS THE DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS WITH RESPECT TO WORKING AREAS, THEREBY SHARPLY LIMITING MOBILITY OF BLACK WORKERS. A BASIC FEATURE OF THE HOMELANDS POLICY IS TO EXPLOIT BLACK LABOR WITHOUT GRANTING THE BLACK SOCIAL, ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL RIGHTS AND BENEFITS COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF THE WHITE POPULATION. ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT, THE ONLY REASON FOR A BLACK TO BE IN THE SO-CALLED WHITE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY IS TO OFFER HIS LABOR FOR SALE. BOWDLER

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7. THE STATUS OF BLACK WORKERS VARIES FROM THOSE BORN,

RAISED, EDUCATED AND EMPLOYED IN THE URBAN AND RURAL WHITE AREAS TO SHORT-TERM MIGRANT WORKERS FROM THE HOMELANDS AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WHO ARE REQUIRED TO LEAVE THE WHITE AREAS OF SOUTH AFRICA AT THE EXPIRATION OF THEIR WORK CONTRACTS. EVEN FOR THOSE BORN AND RAISED IN SOUTH AFRICA, THEIR CONTINUED RIGHT TO RESIDENCE CAN BE JEOPARDIZED BY LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT. THE SYSTEM OF INFLUX CONTROL COMBINED WITH SUBSIDIZED BORDER AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOMELAND INDUSTRIES HAS NOT SUCCEEDED, HOWEVER, IN KEEPING BLACKS FROM SEEKING AND OBTAINING WORK IN THE URBAN AREAS OF SOUTH AFRICA. WITH RAPIDLY INCREASING POPULATIONS, THE HOMELANDS WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE WORK OPPORTUNITIES TO RESIDENTS.

8. BECAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN HOMELAND AREAS, INCREASING NUMBERS OF BLACKS MOVE TO URBAN AREAS IN VIOLATION OF THE SYSTEM OF INFLUX CONTROL AND PASS LAW REGULATIONS. IT IS BELIEVED THAT 20-30 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACK TOWNSHIPS ARE ILLEGAL RESIDENTS. EVEN WHEN AUTHORIZATION IS OBTAINED, IT IS USUALLY ONLY FOR THE WAGE EARNER AND NOT HIS FAMILY. THESE PRACTICES BREAK UP FAMILY LIFE WITH HARMFUL SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR BLACK WORKERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. IT CREATES A CLASS OF "ITINERANT" WORKERS LIVING IN, BUT NOT PART OF, THE COMMUNITY IN BLACK URBAN TOWNSHIPS. IT ALSO MAKES THE ILLEGAL WORKER HIGHLY VULNERABLE TO THE AUTHORITIES AND MANAGEMENT AND GREATLY INHIBITS HIS ACTING IN DEFENSE OF WORKER RIGHTS.

9. COMPLEX LEGISLATION AND INGRAINED CUSTOM ALSO HAMPER THE VERTICAL MOBILITY OF BLACK WORKERS. THUS WHILE THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK LABOR FORCE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY IS VITAL, THE VAST MAJORITY OF BLACKS ARE STILL RESTRICTED TO UNSKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED CATEGORIES OF WORK. IN THE JOHANNESBURG AREA, FOR EXAMPLE, LESS THAN SEVEN PERCENT OF THE BLACK LABOR FORCE IS IN SKILLED AND SUPERVISORY POSITIONS. PROBABLY NOT MORE THAN ONE PERCENT PER YEAR MOVE INTO THESE POSITIONS, FAR TOO SLOW TO MEET THE MANPOWER NEEDS OF AN EXPANDING ECONOMY AND CERTAINLY THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE BLACK WORKER. THE SYSTEM OF JOB RESERVATION, WHICH LED TO THE ALARMING SITUATION WHERE 40,000 UNFILLED VACANCIES IN APRIL 1976 WERE RESERVED FOR WHITES, IS A SERIOUS BAR TO NECESSARY ADJUSTMENT, POLITICALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND SYMBOLICALLY. WHILE SUPPORTERS OF JOB RESERVATION POINT OUT THAT IT DIRECTLY AFFECTS ONLY 2.4 PERCENT OF THE LABOR FORCE, THEY NEGLECT TO OBSERVE THAT THE LEGAL RESERVATION OF WORK FOR MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR RACE HAS A MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF PERPETUATING A MUCH WIDER RESERVATION OF CATEGORIES OF WORK BY ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICE.

10. THE INABILITY OF BLACK WORKERS TO MOVE UP THE OCCUPATIONAL LADDER FAST ENOUGH CONTRIBUTES NOT ONLY TO AN EVER INCREASING SHORTAGE OF SKILLS IN THE HIGHER OCCUPATIONAL LEVES, BUT ALSO TO A SURPLUS OF UNSKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED LABOR. INDUSTRY IS FORCED TO PAY THE SCARCE SKILLED CATEGORIES UNREALISTICALLY HIGH WAGES AND IS TEMPTED TO OFFER ONLY BARE SUBSISTENCE LEVELS TO THE CATEGORIES IN OVER SUPPLY. WHILE INDUSTRY HAS IN MANY CASES MORE THAN DOUBLED THE REAL WAGES OF UNSKILLED BLACK WORKERS SINCE 1973, IT HAS FAILED TO NARROW THE WAGE GAP BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO OVER-PAY SKILLED WHITE WORKERS. THIS GAP HAS INCREASED IN REAL TERMS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. BOWDLER

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11. THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED MANPOWER IS A SERIOUS LIMITING FACTOR DURING EXPANSION PHASES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY. DURING GROWTH PERIODS, BLACK WORKERS FILTER INTO OCCUPATIONS PREVIOUSLY RESERVED FOR WHITES WHILE EMPLOYERS ARE OBLIGED TO OFFER WHITES STILL BETTER PAID POSITIONS. THUS THE BLACK WORKER IS NOT PROMOTED IN DIRECT COMPETITION WITH A WHITE WORKER BUT IS GIVEN A POSITION LEFT VACANT WHEN THE WHITE MOVES UP THE JOB HIERARCHY. ANOTHER DEVICE FREQUENTLY USED IS TO DIVIDE A WHITE JOB, OR REDEFINE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS FUNCTION, IN ORDER TO AVOID PUTTING A BLACK ON A PAR WITH WHITES DOING THE SAME WORK.

12. BY 1980 SOUTH AFRICA, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A HIGH GROWTH RATE, WILL NEED 3.75 MILLION SKILLED WORKERS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL CATEGORIES. THIS MEANS THAT 690,000 PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO OBTAIN SOME HIGHER EDUCATION BY 1980. AT THE PRESENT RATE THE WHITE SECTOR WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ONLY HALF THIS NUMBER. IF BLACKS AND BROWNS ARE TO PROVIDE THE OTHER HALF, SERIOUS INEQUITIES IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OFFERED TO DIFFERENT POPULATION GROUPS WILL HAVE TO BE RECTIFIED.

FACTORS INHIBITING THE BLACK LABOR MOVEMENT:

13. ALTHOUGH BLACK TRADE UNIONS HAVE EXISTED IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1918, THEIR GROWTH AND CONTINUITY HAVE BEEN CIRCUMSCRIBED BY LAW AND CUSTOM. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 28 KNOWN BLACK TRADE UNIONS (JOHANNESBURG A-16) REPRESENTING A TOTAL CLAIMED MEMBERSHIP OF APPROXIMATELY 115,000. PAID-UP MEMBERSHIP IS 49,000. THESE FIGURES CONTRAST WITH A SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK LABOR FORCE OF 7.2 MILLION OF WHICH MORE THAN 4 1/2 MILLION ARE ENGAGED IN NON-AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS.

14. THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO THE EMERGENCE OF A STRONG BLACK LABOR MOVEMENT IS THE APARTHEID LEGISLATION PUT INTO EFFECT SINCE 1948 AND GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PREVENT ORGANIZATION OF BLACK LABOR INTO A COHESIVE FORCE FOR FEAR THAT IT WOULD BE USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE LEGISLATION ARE (A) THE NATIVE LABOR ACT OF 1953

WHICH GRANTS OFFICIAL REGISTRATION ONLY TO WHITE AND COLORED UNIONS AND OUTLAWS STRIKES BY OR ON BEHALF OF BLACKS, (B) A 1959 AMENDMENT PROHIBITING EMPLOYERS FROM DEDUCTING UNION DUES FROM BLACKS' WAGES, (C) A 1973 AMENDMENT OF BANTU LABOR RELATIONS ACT WHICH PROVIDES FOR WHITE BANTU LABOR OFFICERS TO ACT IN INTERMEDIARIES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BETWEEN BLACK EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS AND HELP ESTABLISH "WORK COMMITTEES" TO REPRESENT WORKER INTERESTS. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS HAVE FOCUSED ON EFFORTS (INCLUDING ARRESTS, DETENTIONS AND BANNINGS) TO FRUSTRATE MANY OF THE MORE ACTIVIST BLACK TRADE UNION ORGANIZERS AND WHITE SYMPATHIZERS IN UNIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH BLACK LABOR AFFAIRS (FOR EXAMPLE, BANNING OF 23 SUCH PERSON LAST NOVEMBER, SEE 76 JOHANNESBURG 2062).

15. THE GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO PREVENT THE RISE OF A STRONG BLACK LABOR MOVEMENT HAS BEEN ABETTED BY EMPLOYERS WHO, LARGELY FOR ECONOMIC REASONS, HAVE SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY SAG LABOR POLICY TO REFUSE TO DEAL WITH BLACK LABOR UNIONS. DESPITE EMPLOYER ASSERTIONS, IN SOME CASES NO DOUBT SINCERE, OF THEIR DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN THE WORKS COMMITTEE SYSTEM AND ASSIST BLACKS TO MAKE USE OF IT, THE FACT REMAINS THAT WORKS COMMITTEES ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR RECOGNIZED TRADE UNIONS. ONE LARGE SUPERMARKET CHAIN RECENTLY AROUSED CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY WHEN IT ANNOUNCED ITS WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH A BLACK UNION AND TO ALLOW NORMAL UNION ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES ON ITS PREMISE (CAPE TOWN 0295). VAST MAJORITY OF FIRMS CONTINUE TO USE LAW AND CUSTOM TO AVOID DOING SO.

16. ANOTHER REASON, ARISING FROM THE FIRST TWO, IS THE BLACK WORKERS' RELUCTANCE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LABOR UNIONS. MEMBERSHIP GROWTH OF THE BLACK TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS INHIBITED BY WORKERS' FEAR THAT UNIONS ARE NOT LEGAL AND MAY INVOLVE THEM IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. THE UNSOPHISTICATED WORKER IS MORE LIKELY TO BE AWARE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OPPOSITION TO BLACK TRADE UNIONS THAN THE NUANCE ABOUT UNIONS BEING UNRECOGNIZED BUT NOT ILLEGAL UNDER EXISTING LAW. SOME BLACK WORKERS ARE RELUCTANT TO JOIN BECAUSE OF EXPERIENCES WITH PREVIOUS BLACK UNIONS SUCH AS MISFEASANCE OF OFFICIALS OR THE ARREST OF MEMBERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFTER ILLEGAL STRIKES. THE GREATEST LIMITING FACTOR, HOWEVER, IS FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION BY MANAGEMENT. WITH BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT DURING THE CURRENT RECESSION ESTIMATED TO BE A LEAST 600,000 AND POSSIBLY AS HIGH AS ONE MILLION, THE INDIVIDUAL BLACK WORKER IS NOT IN A STRONG POSITION TO OPPOSE HIS EMPLOYER ON TRADE UNION ISSUES. STRIKING EMPLOYEES, WHOSE WAGES ARE DOCKED, TYPICALLY HAVE NO SAVINGS TO FALL BACK ON AND NO UNION STRIKE FUND.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH BLACK WORKERS HAVE USED THEIR STRENGTH: BOWDLER

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17. THROUGH LEGISLATION AND DIRECT POLICE INTERVENTION THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS RESTRICTED THE POSSIBILITIES FOR BLACK WORKERS TO USE STRIKE ACTION

AS A WEAPON. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY, STRIKES WERE FREQUENT, PARTICULARLY AMONG WHITE AND BLACK MINERS. IN 1920 MORE THAN 70,000 BLACK MINERS STRUCK FOR HIGHER WAGES AND TO PROTEST COLOR BAR. STRIKE FAILED DUE TO POLICE INTERVENTION. IN 1945 MORE THAN 74,000 BLACK MINERS STRUCK AGAINST LOW WAGES. SEVERAL MINE WORKERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WERE KILLED AND 1200 WOUNDED BUT MINING COMPANIES MADE NO CONCESSIONS. IN THE 1960'S AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 1970'S A FEW THOUSAND BLACK WORKERS PARTICIPATED ANNUALLY IN STRIKE ACTIONS EVEN THOUGH ACCORDING TO EXISTING LEGISLATION IT WAS A SERIOUS CRIME. IN 1972 THERE WAS SOME INCREASE IN STRIKES, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH WAS BY 2,000 STEVEDORES IN DURBAN. IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS THE NUMBER OF STRIKING WORKERS, ESPECIALLY IN DURBAN FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 1973, INCREASED TO NEARLY 76,000.

18. THE 1973 DURBAN STRIKES IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE HISTORICAL PATTERN IN THAT THEY WERE A SPONTANEOUS REACTION, NOT INITIATED BY TRADE UNIONS, TO CHRONICALLY LOW WAGES. THE SUCCESS OF THE DURBAN STRIKERS IN WINNING THEIR WAGE DEMANDS SEEMS TO REFLECT A QUALITATIVE CHANGE IN THE ROLE OF BLACK WORKERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY. THE SPONTANEITY OF THE STRIKE WAVE, HOWEVER, WAS PROBABLY THE MAIN REASON FOR ITS SUCCESS COMPARED TO THE RELATIVE FAILURE OF EARLIER MASS STRIKES BY BLACK WORKERS. WHEN THE STRIKES WERE VISIBLY LED BY ONE GROUP (TRADE UNION) MAKING SPECIFIC DEMANDS, AS WAS THE CASE PRIOR TO 1973, IT WAS RELATIVELY EASY FOR POLICE ACTION TO DISPOSE OF THE LEADERSHIP.

19. AS AN AFTERMATH OF THE RIOTS WHICH STARTED IN SOWETO ON JUNE 16, 1976, PAMPHLETS APPEARED IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS IN AUGUST WHICH URGED WORKERS TO BOYCOTT THEIR PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THREE DAYS TO SHOW THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH THE STUDENTS. WHILE TOO MANY BLACKS LIVE TOO CLOSE TO POVERTY TO BE WILLING TO LOSE EVEN A DAY'S PAY, THE FIRST STRIKE CALL ON AUGUST 4 WAS EFFECTIVE. IN PART THIS WAS DUE TO STUDENT INTIMIDATION BUT ALSO OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR THEIR CAUSE. SIGNIFICANTLY THE CALL WAS FOR A SHORT DURATION AND EMPLOYERS GENERALLY DID LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT PENALIZE ABSENTEE WORKERS. SUBSEQUENT STAY-AT-HOME CALLS ENCOUNTERED INCREASING WORKER RESISTANCE BOTH BECAUSE OF THE DURATION OF THE WORK STOPPAGE AND THE NOTICEABLE HARDENING OF EMPLOYER REACTION IN THE FACE OF PRODUCTION LOSSES. ONCE EMPLOYERS REFUSED TO PAY WORKERS WHO STAYED AWAY, THE WORK BOYCOTT COLLAPSED.

20. SUBSEQUENT TO EVENTS IN SOWETO, ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT STRIKES IN 1976 WAS THAT OF THE DURBAN BUS DRIVERS. THE STRIKE GREW OUT OF A DECISION BY THE DURBAN CORPORATION TO PUT BLACK AND WHITE WORKERS ON THE SAME WAGE SCALE AND PAY BLACKS AND WHITES THE SAME STARTING WAGE. FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY OF THE CORPORATION'S AFRICAN, COLORED AND INDIAN WORKERS WENT OUT ON STRIKE WHEN THE WHITE TRADE UNION TOOK THE MATTER TO AN INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL AND WON REINSTATEMENT OF THE RACIALLY DISCRIMINATORY STARTING WAGE. ONCE AGAIN THE POLICE CHOSE TO USE FORCE TO BREAK THE STRIKE. THE BLACKS WERE ALSO HANDICAPPED BY THE FACT THEY HAD NO RECOGNIZED UNION TO DISPUTE THE POSITION OF THE WHITE UNION BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL COURT.

FACTORS INHIBITING BLACKS FROM USING THEIR LEVERAGE
21. GIVEN THE DOMINANT, EVEN VITAL, POSITION OF BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S WORK FORCE, IT IS FREQUENTLY ASSUMED THAT THE WITHHOLDING OF LABOR IS THE BLACK MAN'S BEST WEAPON IN DEALING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. IN FACT, THE POTENTIAL IS THERE BUT HE DOES NOT USE IT. IN PREVIOUS SECTIONS SOME OF THE REASONS HAVE BEEN MENTIONED: THE SYSTEM OF LAW AND REGULATION GOVERNING BLACK LABOR RELATIONS IS A TREMENDOUS DISINCENTIVE TO ORGANIZE; THE PRECARIOUS EXISTANCE OF THE BLACK WORKER IN WHITE AREAS MAKES HIM UNUSUALLY VULNERABLE TO SAG AUTHORITIES; THE RELUCTANCE OF THE BLACK WORKER TO RISK HIS JOB BY JOINING A UNION WHICH HE FEARS IS LIKELY TO BRING HIM GREATER PROBLEMS THAN BENEFITS.
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22. OTHER CAUSES LIE IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION AND MORE FUNDAMENTALLY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS. THE CURRENT RECESSION HAS FURTHER INVOLVED THE POSITION OF THE BLACK WORKER BY INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF UNSKILLED LABOR. UNDERSTANDABLY THEIR ATTITUDE IS TO HOL ON TO A JOB AT ALL COSTS. THE SUBSERVIENCE OF BLACKS BROUGHT ON THROUGH MANY YEARS OF SOCIAL AND LEGAL REPRESSION ALSO CONTRIBUTES BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDUCING IN THE BLACK WORKER A LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM AND A SENSE THAT HE IS PRE-DESTINED TO HOLD HIS LOW POSITION IN THE SOCIAL ORDER. HE IS OVERCOMING THIS, BUT IT HAS BEEN A SLOW PROCESS. THERE IS IN ADDITION AN ABSENCE OF COHESIVENESS IN THE BLACK LABOR FORCE. THE DAY LABORER LIVING ILLEGALLY IN SOWETO IS MOTIVATED DIFFERENTLY FROM THE REGULARLY EMPLOYED INDIVIDUAL WHOSE STATUS IS LEGAL; FROM THE MIGRANT WORKERS, WHOSE BASIC AIM IS TO SERVE OUT HIS CONTRACT PERIOD WITHOUT DISRUPTION; OR FROM THE RESIDENT OF A HOMELAND WHO COMMUTES TO WORK IN WHITE AREAS. TRIBAL DIFFERENCES MAY ALSO

DIMINISH THE TENDENCY OF BLACK WORKERS TO LOOK UPON THEMSELVES AS A UNITED FORCE HAVING THE SAME INTERESTS AND AIMS.

23. THE PLAY OF THESE FACTORS WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT IN THE RESPONSE OF ADULT BLACKS TO THE STAY-AT-HOME CALLS BY THE SOWETO YOUTH LAST JULY AND AUGUST. ALLOWING FOR MISTAKES BY THE STUDENTS IN THE TIMING AND SCOPE OF THEIR WORK BOYCOTT, THE UNDERLYING REASON FOR LACK OF ADULT SUPPORT WAS THE VULNERABILITY OF THE BLACK WORKER AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO PLAY ON JOB LOSS FEARS AND RESIDENT-TRANSIENT WORKER RIVALRIES TO DEFEAT THE EFFORT. IF THE BLACK WORKERS HAD HAD THE ORGANIZATION AND DISCIPLINE AND USED IT ON A NATIONWIDE SCALE IN SUPPORT OF THE STUDENTS, THEY COULD HAVE BROUGHT THE ECONOMY TO A HALT IN SHORT ORDER AND FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. INSTEAD THE RESPONSE WAS LOCALIZED AND EQUIVOCAL AND RAPIDLY COLLAPSED.

OUTLOOK FOR BLACK LABOR AS A FACTOR FOR CHANGE:

24. WILL THE BLACK WORKER OF SOUTH AFRICA USE HIS POTENTIAL STRENGTH? EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR HAVE BROUGHT A GROWING SELF-AWARENESS AMONG THE BLACK POPULATION. THEY HAVE AWAKENED TO THE FACT THAT INDUSTRIES CAN BE PARALYZED, SHIPS LEFT UNLOADED AND TRANSPORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SYSTEMS BROUGHT TO A HALT. WHITE EMPLOYERS, FEARFUL OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF INSTABILITY AND VIOLENCE, HAVE INCREASED WAGES, REMOVED SOME OF THE MOST OBVIOUS INEQUITIES AND BEGUN TO TALK AND LISTEN TO THEIR BLACK WORKERS. GOVERNMENT HAS MADE FRINGE CONCESSIONS WITH RESPECT TO TOWNSHIP LEASEHOLDS, DESEGREGATION OF A FEW PUBLIC FACILITIES AND A FEW HOTELS, WIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK TRADERS, ETC., BUT ITS RECORD WITH RESPECT TO BLACK WORKERS IS NOT ENCOURAGING.

25. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO WAVER BETWEEN CONFRONTATION AND ACCOMMODATION. THE CONCESSIONS MENTIONED ABOVE MUST BE WEIGHTED AGAINST THE ADAMANT OPPOSITION TO ALLOWING BLACK UNIONS TO ORGANIZE WITH LEGAL RIGHTS, THE BANNING OF PERSONS ASSISTING THE BLACK TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, AND THE DISMAL RECORD ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS, ON COMMUTER TRANSPORT CONDITIONS AND FARES AND TOUGHER PASS LAWS. THESE REFLECT A QUALIFIED WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS AND REMOVE SOME OF THE MORE BLATANT DISCRIMINATION BUT NO CHANGE ON THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THEIR RIGHT TO BE IN SO-CALLED WHITE AREAS AND TO BE TREATED AS EQUALS.

26. THE GREAT MAJORITY OF BLACK WORKERS ARE STILL INHIBITED FROM PROTESTING AGAINST THE SYSTEM BY THEIR NEED TO EARN A LIVELIHOOD. THEY MAY NOT LIKE THEIR LOT BUT SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO CHANGING THEIR SITUATION THAT WOULD NOT ENTAIL GREATER RISKS AND HARDSHIPS. CERTAINLY THE MASS OF URBAN WORKERS REALIZE THEY ARE BETTER OFF THAN THEIR HOMELAND COUNTERPARTS WHO ARE PROHIBITED FROM MOVING TO URBAN AREAS WHERE EMPLOYMENT MAY BE FOUND.

27. AT THE SAME TIME DISAFFECTED YOUTH AND RADICALS AMONG THE BLACKS ARE EXERTING A GROWING INFLUENCE. EVENTS BEYOND SOUTH AFRICA'S BORDERS HAVE DEEPENED CONSCIOUSNESS OF INJUSTICES TO WHICH THEY ARE EXPOSED.
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FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE THE BLACK LABOR MOVEMENT ACQUIRING ENOUGH STRENGTH OR THE SAG THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY TO PERMIT THESE TWO FORCES TO INTERACT CONSTRUCTIVELY. THE BLACK WORKER IS NEVERTHELESS A FUNDAMENTAL FACTOR IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA WHETHER BY REVOLUTIONARY OR OTHER MEANS. HE REPRESENTS A FORCE WHICH CAN BE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZED FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IF THE SYSTEM CAN BRING ITSELF TO ACCOMMODATE HIS DEMANDS. OTHERWISE, IF THE PRESSURES BECOME UNBEARABLE, THE GRIEVANCES OF BLACK WORKERS COULD IGNITE THE INCREASINGLY COMBUSTIBLE SOUTH AFRICAN RACIAL SITUATION.BOWDLER

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